the austere yet lighter shades of oats and rye. Colour is lent by blue flax, red and white poppies and verdant green fields.

The view is dominated by range upon sweeping range of eternal mountains. White highways curve gracefully up and again down the steep slopes. Everywhere at the highest point stands a dark-green forest of pines. At times the ground stops abruptly, and you can see whence the gigantic stone masses fell—and are falling still today—which formerly towered above field and forest as ancient mountains. A precipice drops steeply away, the debris of fallen stone-masses lying at its foot among the many trees. Past great piles of stones large and small flow the Thaya and the Kamp, sweeping stones with them. They swirl in endless bends around the foot of cliff after cliff. About their sheer walls stand defiant castles and dreamy ruins.

Apricot Gathering in the Wachau District.

Once you were invited to visit the forest district. For a whole day you journeyed through the woods and then you were forced to stop. Before you arose a great baroque tower, below it a forest of gothic pillars reaching towards the heavens, cloisters and a shaded well, the whole complicated gothic blossoming and romanesque fading—the monastery of Zwettl in its lovely situation on the banks of the swift-flowing Kamp amidst mighty forests. Continuing, you came to the frontier, high above. A piece of secular and chivalric history confronted you like a rock—Heidenreichstein, the most beautiful river-castle of the Province.

Usage and custom are rooted in the soil of the woodlands. On the house gables appear May blossoms in many colours. Young men plant green fir-trees, decorated with waving ribbons, for their girls. Mischievous "May paths" are devised with sawdust or water mixed with lime which are suddenly found leading over streets and byways from a certain door to another, thus making public what the parties concerned had kept a closely-guarded secret.

In many places the winter evenings still see the traditional "Rockreise". Women and girls "visit" friends in order to spin thread. Softly the delicate wheels turn, young men come and sing, and the women and girls tell stories of the robber chief Grasl, of the wicked Waldschrat and of God's vengeance on the inquisitive girl. Here and there an old loom is still standing.

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Food is not, as ascetics proclaim, just a means of prolonging a puritan existence. Far from it. Feeding—the exquisite pleasure of absorbing nourishment—is a very intimate part of the most important and the most pleasurable experiences of life. Manners and costumes associated with eating often give a faithful picture of a whole epoch, reflecting the various stages of its development whithout artificial gloss or sham. The standard of cooking and table manners reveals human—or all too human—characteristics, both of individuals and of races.

In Austria—as you will already have noticed—everything dates a long way back, the most modern things originating at the latest in the days of Maria Theresia. Very much dates back to Leopold, the saintly Babenberg, and even to the Romans. Gastronomy, the art of the epicure, goes back to prehistoric times, for in Vienna the fact has never been overlooked that taste is the first sense to awaken and the last to fade. Literature expresses its universal importance with the words: Eating is life intensified.

181 The words "Wiener Lebensart"—the Viennese manner of living—implies first of all a cultivated appreciation of all the pleasures of life—something which the non-Viennese may dismiss as self-gratification. The Viennese know how to interpret gratification, and find in it nothing derogatory. On the contrary, delight in pleasures of the senses, a desire to enjoy the good things of life contribute towards creative achievement. These things are the inexhaustible source of the Austrian people's artistic gifts, the primary urge to stretch out one's hand towards violin or palette and brush. From them arise the vagaries of fashion, the inspired variations of applied art and that style of living and being which the ancestors called "the life of the Phaeaces".

Would Odysseus ever have returned to his Penelope without the help of Nausikaa, the well-disposed daughter of the Phaeaces of the pleasure-loving island of Scheria? The reproach implied in the word "Phäakentum" only arouses a smile here. People are well contented that pleasure-loving Vienna should be an island in the wearisome and baffling journey of life.

But let us approach the important subject of gastronomy with a respectful obeisance to bygone days:

262 A HERITAGE FROM GODS AND ANCESTORS. One can hardly speak of a culinary art prior to the arrival of the Romans and the Germanic tribes in the country, for the Celts were very primitive eaters. Their food consisted of very little bread but plenty of meat, which was boiled in water or roasted on a spit.

261 From the Teutons two principles have been handed down unaltered—that nothing ● 574 should be begun on an empty stomach, and that the famous Teutonic hospitality was a first duty. As Tacitus says in his "Germania": "No other race is so eager

to offer unlimited entertainment and hospitality. For these people it is wrong to close one's doors to anyone, no matter whom."

Early Austrian guide books praise Viennese hospitality in the same way. The Viennese, according to many later accounts, were always fond of eating and drinking, especially in public places such as the Prater, Schönbrunn or the Augarten, a fact which earned them among foreigners the reputation of being heavy eaters. It was also their custom always to cook something special for the guest and to feed him lavishly.

But to return to the ancients. The Roman way of life had a greater influence on the stomachs of the Viennese than did that of the Teutons. In ancient Rome eating was a science in which delicate tastes were combined with unlimited luxury. Over the city on the Tiber hovered the spirit of culinary art. According to Plutarch, Caesar understood how to plan banquets with as much care and forethought as battles. Horace and Ovid reveal to us great interest in food and drink, refined by poetry. Ovid describes how a young man dipped his fingers in red wine during a feast in order to write a declaration of love on a small table. The feasts of Lucullus are still proverbial today and the gluttonous orgies of the parvenue Trimalchion are known to us through the tales of Petronius. Many a Viennese may have felt a spiritual bond with Cato as he repeated with a sigh his complaint: "How hard a thing it is to try to talk to one's belly, which has no ears to hear."

Cabbage, which they like to serve in Vienna as a garniture to the traditional beef, was known to the gods of the Greeks. It originated from the tears which the Thracian Prince Lycurgus shed when Bacchus bound him to a vine-pole for frivolously destroying grapes. The ancient Egyptians could consume quantities of beer and wine without getting drunk because they ate cooked cabbage before beginning their drinking bouts. Cato recommended the same practice to Roman drinkers.

Lettuce was sacred to Aphrodite because she once hid the new-born Adonis among lettuces. To the Greek gods salads came third among their favourite foods, following nectar and ambrosia. Viennese cannot have forgotten this, for in the preparation of this olympic dish they employ qualities required by other favourites of the gods, the poets—imagination, perseverance, instinct and the gift of composition.

The egg, which is supposed to have given birth to many divine, heroic and unworldly beings, was associated by the Teutons with hares, brightly coloured eggs being sacrificed at the feast of Ostara, the Goddess of Spring, whose favourite animal was the hare. Until the early Middle Ages it was the custom for godparents to bring painted eggs as present, to the christening. Searching for Easter eggs is still a pleasing custom in all parts of the Austrian provinces, and there is hardly a table at Easter which is not decorated with coloured eggs.

with bread which he afterwards ate, such was the general mistrust and fear of poisoning. The talisman was long used at table: it was laid beneath glass or plate. 000

In the 15th century, Vienna cooking was considered to be among the best in Europe, and when the Viennese went to war, he took his best cooks to camp with him. The doughty Capuchin monk Abraham a Santa Clara more than once flew into a passion over Viennese gormandizing. He was not surprised, he said in one of his sermons, that house and farm were so often ruined because of the owner's overeating and that the noble soul was suppressed by the fat paunch.

DAYS OF SPLENDOUR. Splendour and luxury reached their climax in Austria in Leopoldian times, under Karl VI, under Prince Eugene and during the days of the Vienna Congress. Table decoration was a special feature of every official banquet. Fantastic shapes in sugar-icing, arabesques, ornamentation and groups of merry figures were the fashion in the days of great court banquets. The arrangement of the dishes competed with the table decorations; roasted doves and chickens, for instance, would be grouped about a pelican made of baked bread. 264 252

In this decorative period, they went so far as to produce gilded sucking-pigs. Astonishing pastry ships were filled with fruits of marzipan: the latter are still popular today. At other times table fireworks competed with disguised foods and artistic creations such as statues, fountains and castles of edible materials. Many confectioners of the period were trained sculptors.

The most luxurious days for the city were those of the Vienna Congress. Entertainment at the Imperial Court cost 50,000 gulden a day. The wealthy Austrian aristocratic families gave banquets to as many as 700 guests at a time, one day in the week being reserved for such brilliant affairs. 648 574

The so-called table d'hôte was never a success in Vienna. To these "Landlords tables" a certain number of people came at a fixed hour in order to partake of a meal which was served to everyone simultaneously at a fixed price. He who could eat quickest with the smallest regard for others was at an advantage, but as the Viennese dislike haste at mealtimes, the tables d'hôte were little patronised. 265

Apart from the customary eating-houses, there were also what were called the "tracteurs". Here one could eat at any time between eleven a. m. and three p. m., lunch costing up to a gulden according to what was chosen. The customers were drawn from a wide range of social classes. The manager stood in the middle of the room like a major commanding his troops and gave his orders to the waiters. The eaters sat packed together like sardines, gulped down their food and were quickly replaced by others.

In biedermeier times the middle classes lived most of their lives at home in the bosom of the family, where they also entertained guests, and took little interest in appearing in public. For this reason their history is bound up with family tradition. Their way of life and customs inspired an art style which embodied and preserved 565 593